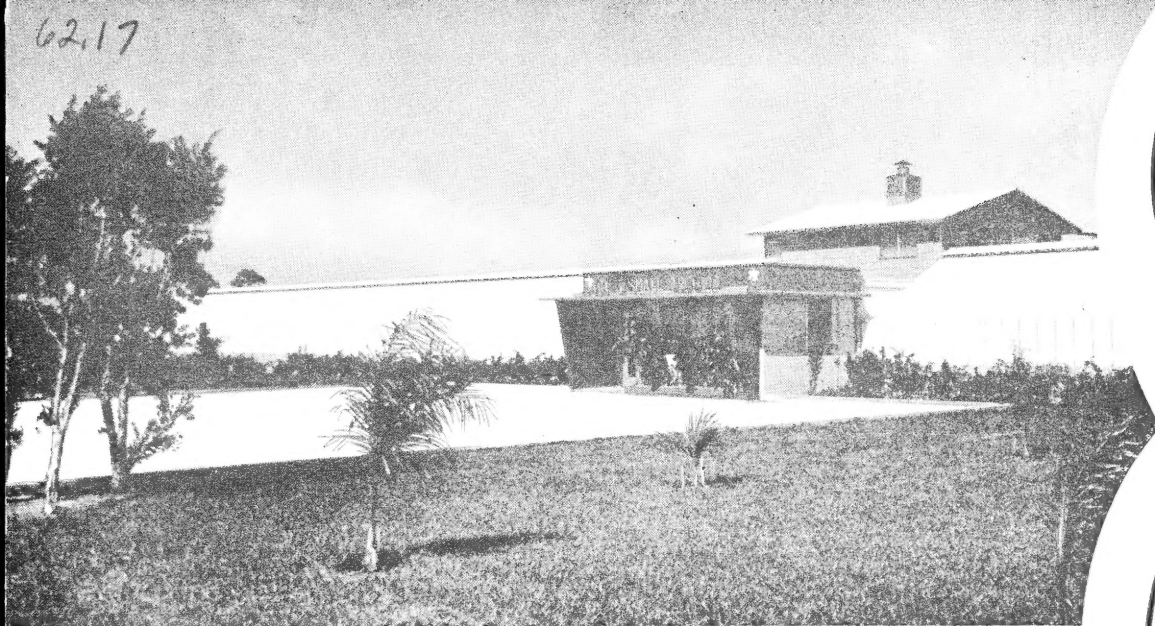


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St. Petersburg, Florida

ORCHIDS FOR YOU



ARL J. MALL



ORCHIDS FOR ALL

Orchid growing has become a very popular hobby. Of the fifteen thousand growers in U. S. over 90% are enthusiastic hobbyists.

History: Prior to 1890 orchids grew almost exclusively in private collections of the well-to-do. Owners depended on collectors in the jungles of South America and tropical Asia for their supplies of flowering plants. Most commercial orchid establishments even had their own representatives in the jungles to handle the collecting and exporting of plants. As a result of scientific research, today most orchid plants are raised from seed by a very exacting scientific procedure for the first few years but after a plant is two or three years old, requirements are much less and no more exacting than growing roses.



Our Cattleya St. Petersburg variety, "The Mayor", a fine pure white named in 1949 in honor of the first orchid show to be held in this city. It has won us four first prizes in orchid show exhibits to the present date.

BASIC CULTURE

Orchids are either *terrestrial* (growing in soil) or *epiphytic* (growing on trees, shrubs or rocks, their native habitat, roots seldom touching the ground). Orchids are not parasites. In culture the epiphytes are usually grown in *osmunda*, the dry roots of "royal" or "cinnamon" fern. BOTH types require air, sunlight, warmth, food and water for growth.

AIR: Orchids need an abundance of fresh, humid air at all times but should not be placed in cold drafts.

SUNLIGHT: Orchids need as much sunlight as they can stand without injury. Direct sunlight is too much; the amount passing through several layers of cheesecloth is about right. Leaves turn yellowish in too much sun or turn blue-green and fleshy in too much shade. For best growth and flowers, the leaves should be slightly yellow-green, and somewhat stiff and leathery to the touch.

WARMTH: Heat requirements vary with the types of plants, most not requiring high temperatures. Temperature for cooler types should not drop consistently below 50° F., for warmer types below 60° F. Difference between day and night temperatures should not exceed 20°. Changes should be gradual.

FOOD: Terrestrial orchids should be fed by adding guano, fish meal, well-aged barnyard manure or commercial fertilizers to the soil. Feeding epiphytes is debatable; some growers feed . . . most who do are experimenting. Until information is proven, additional feeding is not recommended for beginners. Epiphytes will obtain sufficient nutrition from the *osmunda* in which they grow and from watering.

WATER: One of the most important elements in plant growth. Water is absorbed through humidity in the air, and by direct application which includes watering both the root system and the leaves. Water the root system until it begins to drip from the pot bottom. Allow the root system to become almost dry before watering again . . . usually a period of 5 to 10 days depending on the atmosphere. Leaves should be moistened by a mist or spray, usually every day, more often in hot, dry weather. Humidity should not be less than 40% nor more than 70%. Some fluctuation is beneficial.

HOME CULTURE

Having learned what orchids are, and their basic cultural requirements, let us consider practical methods of home culture. There are three of these methods . . . "window sill", wardian case, and greenhouse. Since beginners seldom have greenhouses, only the first two methods are considered here. For window sill culture, choose a window exposed to considerable sunlight. Provide thin curtains, or other means of filtering light so that the plants are not exposed to the full strength of the direct sun rays. Place glass or metal vessels in the window, and put the plants on wire or wood slat racks over the vessel. Place gravel, coke or charcoal in the vessels, and keep this material moist at all times. Evaporation from this material provides humidity for the atmosphere. Water the root system by simply pouring water on the top of the pot until it begins to drip at the bottom. An atomizer will provide a satisfactory mist for the leaves, or, if this is not practical, plants may be taken to the sink and sprayed. As nearly as possible, keep the room temperature above 60°. Temperatures comfortable to humans are usually also comfortable to orchids.

A wardian case is simply a glass "box" in which conditions of temperature and humidity may be controlled more easily than on a window sill. These cases may be purchased ready made or be home-made by one handy with tools. A favorite method of construction is to build a solid bottom of boards, four stationary sides of window-sash, and hinge a top of window sash. Bore a few holes in the bottom for ventilation; place on the bottom a metal container of gravel or coke; place the plants on a rack over this container and your plants are ready to grow and bloom. The case may be any size desired and placed where the plants will receive an abundance of light. The exterior finish may be made to conform to the interior decorating scheme of the rest of the room.



All orchid seeds are planted by a laboratory technician who tends them carefully for a year's time.

ORCHID CHARACTERISTICS

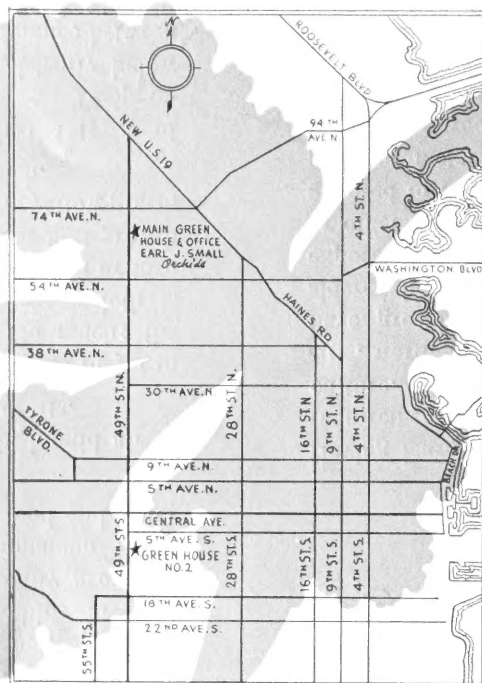
It is a mistake to believe that all orchids look alike. Their foliage varies considerably; the flowers themselves range from very simple to exotically beautiful, sometimes fantastic shapes. However, all orchid blooms have three features in common. First, there are sepals usually three, which are narrow and form a protective covering of the bud. Second, there are three petals, two of which are alike. The third petal known as the lip is shaped differently, is spectacularly colored, and is quite often the most beautiful part of the flower.

Third, there is the fleshy column in which the stamens and pistils are united. This column is not found in any other plant family.



Orchids to Grow at Home

The orchid family, with its 16,000 species and untold thousands of hybrids is likely to confuse one just starting. Although specie orchids (jungle strains) are widely used to entice the beginner by their low price, most of these are not too satisfactory. We have found it is better to recommend the less expensive types of mature *Cattleya* hybrids, as they are not only stronger and easier to grow, but also produce more and better flowers. Our older hybrids are always available to orchid hobbyists at reasonable prices because we are constantly replacing them with new hybrids which are bred from our own extensive collection of valuable stud plants.



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

We recommend the following sources for further information:

"HOME ORCHID GROWING"

Price\$6.00

Rebecca Tyson Northern

D. Van Nostrand Co., Inc. . . . 1950

"MONTHLY BULLETINS ON ORCHID CULTURE"

American Orchid Society, Inc.

Botanical Museum of Harvard University, Cambridge 38, Mass.

Price: Includes 1 yr. membership in SocietyPrice \$7.00

If interested in the purchase of orchid plants, ask for our latest catalog.

EARL J. SMALL ORCHIDS

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